



## Leach's Storm-Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* breeding in South Africa

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En 1995, une petite population d'Océanites cul-blancs *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* a été découverte sur l'île Dyer, Afrique du Sud. La nidification y a été confirmée en 1996 et la population d'environ 20 couples est restée stable depuis. L'espèce est présente, et est probablement nicheuse, sur deux autres îles proches du littoral sud-africain. Ceci constitue la première nidification confirmée de l'espèce en Afrique et dans l'hémisphère sud.

In October 1995, a small group of Leach's Storm-Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* was discovered on Dyer Island, off the south coast of South Africa<sup>2,5</sup>. The behaviour, occupation of suitable nest sites and capture of one with a well-developed brood patch, suggested that the species was breeding.

In November 1996, breeding was confirmed when an adult, occupying a cavity in a dry-stone wall, was found to be incubating an egg. At least 19 individuals were heard calling from the network of stone walls in the vicinity. In February 1997, the nest cavity was again examined and found to contain a chick, estimated to be 30–45 days old. The chick had a covering of down on its head and body, the wing-coverts were 'in pin' and the remiges and rectrices were well developed<sup>4</sup>. Indications were that it had fledged by mid-March. Chicks were heard calling in two other nest cavities during the February visit.

Between 1997 and 2000, the population has remained stable at c20 pairs, and breeding was again confirmed in 1998 and 1999. In February 1998, six nests, each with a chick, were located and two chicks were ringed<sup>1</sup>. Another two chicks were ringed in February 1999. In November 2000, nine adult Leach's Storm-Petrel were mist-netted and ringed, thus doubling the total number of adults of this species ringed in South Africa.

At least four adults were heard calling overhead at Dassen Island, off South Africa's west coast, in November 1996. At least two have been heard calling there at suitable nest sites in subsequent years. The species almost certainly breeds at this locality, though this requires confirmation. In October 2000, four Leach's Storm-Petrel were heard calling from likely nest sites in a stone wall at Jutten Island, also on the west coast, and a fifth site appeared to be occupied<sup>3</sup>.

Previous searches of this stretch of wall at the same time of year and in similar weather conditions had failed to locate any Leach's Storm-Petrel.

These observations represent the first confirmed breeding of the species on the African continent and in the Southern Hemisphere.

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### References

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